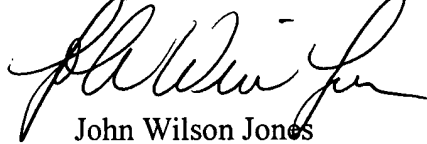


**Conclusions.** The Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned should she deem it prudent to expedite the prosecution of this application.

Dated: December 12, 2006

Respectfully submitted,



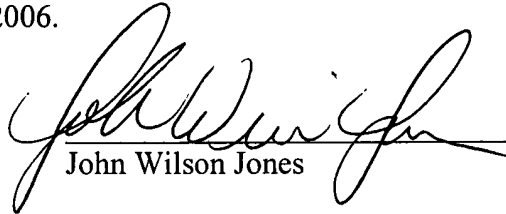
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**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING, 37 C.F.R. § 1.8(A)**

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being mailed by first class mail, postage prepaid, addressed to Commissioner for Patents, P. O. Box 1450, Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450 on this the 12<sup>th</sup> day of December 2006.



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distinctions are further discussed in the paragraph below. The Examiner indicated that the claimed subject matter was distinguishable over *Dawson*.

**Examiner's Rejection Over Dawson.** The Examiner has rejected Claims 1, 3-5, 7-29, 31-51, 54, 55, 57-59 and 62-93 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by *Dawson*. This ground of rejection is traversed.

Each of the claims of Applicants is directed to *porous* particulate materials, i.e., porous ceramics or (as set forth in Claim 3) porous natural ceramics, polyolefins, styrene-divinylbenzene copolymers or polyalkylacrylate esters. *Dawson* is directed to deformable naturally occurring cellulosic materials, such as walnut hulls, etc. The only natural materials claimed in the instant application are the natural *porous* ceramics of Claim 3.

In the claimed embodiment of Claim 19, the coating on Applicants' porous particulates does not interfere with the ability of air or a gas to at least partially fill the pores of the porous particulate. As a result, buoyancy is increased. In contrast, the porosity of the core material of *Dawson* is filled by the coating such that the overall strength of the particulate is increased.

Materials like silanes may further be used in *Dawson* (*see* Example 3) to provide deformation resistance to the particulate. Porous ceramics, as well as the porous particulates of Claim 3 of Applicants, are non-deformable.

In light of the distinctions between *Dawson* and the claimed subject matter, the rejection should not be maintained.